

BOARD OF ETHICS
OPEN SESSION MINUTES

May 14, 2014 - 3:15 p.m.
740 North Sedgwick, Suite 500

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Stephen W. Beard, Chair
Russell F. Carlson
Mary T. Carr
Hon. Michael J. Gallagher
Frances R. Grossman
Hon. Julia M. Nowicki

STAFF PRESENT

Steven I. Berlin, Executive Director
Lisa S. Eilers, Deputy Director
Richard J. Superfine, Legal Counsel
Ana Collazo, Attorney Investigator
Edward Primer, Program Director
Pully Casillas, Staff Assistant

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Daisy S. Lezama

I. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Board VOTED 6-0 (Dr. Daisy S. Lezama, absent) to approve the Open Session Minutes of the April 16, 2014 meeting.

II. CHAIR'S REPORT

None.

III EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A. EDUCATION-CLASSES

Since the last Board meeting, we have held 2 classes in our offices, on April 24 and May 8. 31 attended. There are 27 persons scheduled for classes on May 22 and June 12.

On April 25, staff conducted the first of two training sessions for General Laborers from the Department of Streets & Sanitation. A total of 49 persons will have attended.

Staff will make a presentation to the ex-President of the Comoros Islands on May 20, at the request of the Mayor's Office. Our understanding is that the presidency there rotates between islands, and he will be president again.

Staff will present a (rescheduled) class to senior managers from the Department of Transportation on June 6.

Staff will present a class focusing on the ethics issues faced by attorneys who represent the City before the Department of Administrative Hearings. That class is scheduled for June 24, 2014.

B. LOBBYISTS

As of today, there are 613 registered lobbyists, and we have collected \$312,225 in 2014 registration fees. Quarterly activity reports were due from all registered lobbyists on April 21. Every lobbyist timely filed. Our Electronic Lobbyist Filing System (ELF) sent out courtesy reminders to all registered lobbyists on March 31 and April 10.

C. ON-LINE TRAINING

At this writing, 199 lobbyists have completed their required ethics training. They have until July 1, 2014 to complete the program. Reminder notices were sent on April 16 to all lobbyists who had not completed the program.

The all-new 2014 ethics training for employees and elected officials other than City Council members "went live" on May 5. To date, we have received ethics training plans from 37 departments and aldermanic offices, and 879 employees have already completed the program. City personnel required to take this program have until the end of the year to complete it.

D. STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL INTERESTS

On February 28, 3,162 employees and officials were notified of their requirement to file 2014 Statements of Financial Interests. To date, 2,224 have filed, and their forms have been posted on our website for public inspection (where they remain for seven years). The deadline for filing is June 2, 2014 (as May 31 falls on a Saturday). Notices were sent to all non-filers beginning at midnight on April 16, and will again be sent beginning midnight on May 16, and lists of non-filers were sent to all department heads, aldermen and ethics officers on April 21, May 13 (today) and will again be sent on May 21.

E. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ORDINANCE

The Ordinances introduced in October 2013 by Alderman Patrick O'Connor regarding enforcement of campaign contribution violations by the Legislative Inspector General are still pending in the City Council's Rules Committee. The Board's open letter to elected City officials was delivered to the Mayor and aldermen on March 7, 2014, and posted on our website that day.

F. INFORMAL ADVISORY OPINIONS

Since the April 2014 meeting, the agency issued 346 confidential advisory opinions. The leading categories were Statements of Financial Interests, business travel, political activity, campaign financing (as we enter the 12 month period prior to a Consolidated Municipal Election) and, as happens cyclically each spring, post-employment (as employees contemplating retirement on June 30 ask for advice).

Staff continues to work with the Department of Innovation & Technology on a “beta” version of a secure, searchable database for all such informal advisory opinions, and we expect that this project will be completed in June 2014. This will enable Board staff to receive instantaneous reports of opinions issued by topic, department, title, date, etc.

G. UPDATED WEBSITE/New Educational Brochures

Four revised educational brochures have been posted to our website: the General Guide for the Public, the Plain English Guide to Ethics for City Employees and Elected Officials, the Plain English Guide to Secondary Employment (Outside Jobs) for City Employees, and the Guide For Candidates for Elected City Office. We will make arrangements with the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners to distribute material to candidates and their agents before nominating petitions may be circulated (which is on August 26, 2014).

H. RULES AND REGULATIONS

Staff has received comments on its latest draft of its Rules & Regulations from the Inspector General, Law Department and Department of Administrative Hearings. Once they are submitted to the City Council they become effective after 45 days, unless the City Council votes (by majority vote) to disapprove them. There will be more discussion on this in Executive Session.

I. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Since the April 2014 Board meeting, the office received two new requests under the Freedom of Information Act. The first was for lobbyist records of which 11 pages were turned over taken from six available records that were located; the second was a request for records not created or retained by this agency, and the requestor was so advised.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

1. Report on comments received on the Board’s draft Rules and Regulations. Discussion was deferred until Executive Session.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

None.

The Board VOTED 6-0 (Dr. Daisy S. Lezama, absent) to adjourn into Executive Session at 3:17 p.m. under 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity.

At 4:15 p.m., the Board VOTED 6-0 (Dr. Daisy S. Lezama, absent) to reconvene into open session.

VII. MATTERS CONSIDERED AND ACTED UPON BY THE BOARD IN EXECUTIVE SESSION

I. APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

The Board approved the Executive Session minutes of the April 16, 2014 meeting by a 6-0 (Dr. Daisy S. Lezama, absent) vote.

At 4:17 p.m., the Board VOTED 6-0 (Dr. Daisy S. Lezama, absent) to adjourn the meeting.